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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND THE CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT TO LEAD A STUDY TO ASSESS NEW MEXICO'S APPROACH TO PROVIDING SERVICES AND TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN EXPOSED TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

WHEREAS, in 2003, over five thousand child victims of domestic violence received services in New Mexico, and the number continues to increase; and

WHEREAS, multiple research studies have shown that children exposed to domestic violence are likely to be violent themselves, misuse drugs and alcohol, be depressed and suicidal and repeat the cycle of domestic violence when they become teenagers, engaging in physical, emotional and sexual dating violence patterns; and

WHEREAS, children chronically exposed to domestic violence between their parents or caretakers may also be victims of neglect or physical, emotional or sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, the negative effects on children from exposure to domestic violence include emotional distress, somatic complaints, developmental delays or regression, post-traumatic stress symptoms, aggression, delinquency, anxiety and social withdrawal; and

WHEREAS, efforts to strengthen, enhance and expand

1 services for children and adult victims of domestic violence
2 can reduce violence in the home, increase positive health
3 outcomes and help counteract the overall negative effects of
4 domestic violence; and

5 WHEREAS, a study of services available in New Mexico to
6 treat children exposed to domestic violence would assist the
7 department of health, the children, youth and families
8 department and other community groups to better coordinate
9 and improve such services, leading to a more comprehensive
10 continuum of care available and accessible to all traumatized
11 children and their families;

12 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
13 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the department of health and the
14 children, youth and families department be requested to lead
15 a study surveying and assessing New Mexico's approach to
16 providing services and treatment for children exposed to
17 domestic violence; and

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study perform an
19 assessment of services available to treat children exposed to
20 domestic violence in each county in New Mexico and identify
21 the emerging best practices from around the country that
22 address the physical and psychological health and safety
23 concerns for children in violent households; and

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study investigate the
25 need for legislative changes in New Mexico's criminal and

1 child welfare laws to enhance how children exposed to
2 domestic violence get help and develop ways to assist both
3 non-abusing parents and perpetrators in obtaining assistance
4 with substance abuse and parenting issues; and

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study include the
6 cooperation of interested advocacy groups; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department of health and
8 the children, youth and families department report the
9 results of the study, including any legislative
10 recommendations, to the interim legislative health and human
11 services committee by November 1, 2005; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
13 transmitted to the department of health, the children, youth
14 and families department and the chair of the interim
15 legislative health and human services committee. _____

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